

MIDTERM STUDY GUIDE: ROMANTICISM

Week 1: Introduction to Romanticism & Historical Contexts

Starting and endings dates to Romanticism: 1780-1830

Political markers = French Revolution to the Reform Bill (granted the vote to more working-class men)

Historical Context	Example Text
Industrial Revolution	William Blake, "The Chimney Sweeper"
Triangle slave trade (sugar/cotton)	William Cowper, "The Negro's Complaint" Olaudah Equiano, <i>Sold Again</i>
Women's education	Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>

More specifically, 1789-1832: The Storming of the Bastille - Reform Bill

Week 2: English Reactions to the French Revolution

	key terms & passages to study
Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>	entailed inheritance; family affections; we have an inheritable crown that is ageless; all men have equal rights, but not to equal things; passage describing the attack on the royal family; the age of chivalry is gone.
Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Men</i>	gothic notions of beauty; quitting now the flowers of rhetoric, let us, Sir, reason together; the rust of antiquity; "hereditary property" has stopped progress
Thomas Paine, <i>The Rights of Man</i>	governing behind the grave; every age and generation must be free to act for itself; hereditary despotism vs. personal despotism; discontinuing the <i>practice</i> of despotism is not a discontinuance of its <i>principles</i> .

WILLIAM BLAKE: What is the relationship between the poems in *Innocence* and the poems in *Innocence and Experience*?

BLAKE:

1. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: a mixture of poetry and prose
2. *Songs of Innocence* (poems and plates)
3. *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (poems and plates)

Collection	Poems to Know & recognizable features/terms
<i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i>	contraries; devil and angel sightings; "Argument"
<i>Songs of Innocence</i>	Introduction, The Chimney Sweeper, The Little Black Boy, The Lamb
<i>Songs of Innocence and Experience</i>	Introduction, The Chimney Sweeper, The Tyger
	"And Did Those Feet"

Blake ID Terms:

infernal method
visionary poet
"without contraries there is no progression"
Villain / Just Man
Angels / Devils

Week 3: *Lyrical Ballads*

Lyrical Ballads

What is a lyric poem?
What is a ballad? Why is this a novel mixing of the two? How are *LB* representative of Romantic poetry?

Exemplary poem: “Expostulation and Reply” (WW): nature over study; personal experience and feeling over scientific empiricism.

Poems by Wordsworth	Poems by Coleridge
“Expostulation and Reply”	The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
“We are Seven”	Kubla Khan
“The Solitary Reaper”	Christabel (I will not test you on this)
“Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey”	
Be able to categorize in your head: Which poems are sing-song “ballads” and which are more free-flowing lyrics? Which are nature poems based on real life and which are superstitious, supernatural or gothic? Was the division of labor more or less equal between WW and Coleridge?	

Be able to draw poems and speak thematically about how WW and Coleridge represent:

childhood

nature

superstition

low and rustic life

feeling vs. reason

effusion vs. restraint

WW’s Prose Writings	Coleridge’s Prose Writings
Preface to the 1802 <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>	<i>Biographia Literaria</i> : a long work of biography-literary essay-philosophy
key terms:	key terms:
“experiment”	superstitious; supernatural: the dramatic truth of such emotions...supposing the real
pain and pleasure	willing suspension of disbelief for the moment = poetic faith
real language of men; a poet is a man speaking to men	fancy vs. imagination
spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings	low & rustic life
incidents & situations from common life	division of labor between WW and Col
feeling gives importance to the action and situation, not vice versa	
emotion recollected in tranquility	

Week 4: The Conversation Poem and Autobiographical Epic

Verse Forms covered:

- **Sonnet**: iambic pentameter; 14 lines with a turn or volta; abab cdcd efef gg; or abba cddc efgefg
- **Conversation poem**: usually blank verse (unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter) with 3 general sections (strophe, antistrophe, epode); the speaker addresses an auditor at some point, but the auditor never gets a word in edgewise and the poem is mostly personal introspection
- **Epic**: blank verse; very very long, separated into chapters or books. Not rhymed so it can keep going on and on and on without limitation. Usually heroic content.

Running theme amongst all these poetic modes: Egotistical/autobiographical/all about the self!

Coleridge

conversation poem

Study “The Eolian Harp”: metaphor for the Romantic poet

What is the relationship between Poet, Nature, Music and Imagination?

- Who is the poet speaker talking to?
- Does the auditor get to speak back?
- Is there dialogue in a conversation poem?

Wordsworth

“Lines Written...Tintern Abbey”: Study the significance of the opening lines and the notable title of the poem.

- We can consider this a **conversation poem**.
- Where is there a turn in audience? Is the speaker alone? Is he experiencing solitude in nature?
- What is the role of childhood in this poem?
- Discuss how this poem is also a blessing or benediction to his sister.

The Prelude

- Wordsworth wrote a long **epic** in blank verse about his own life. This was construed as a highly daring and egotistical move; usually, epics are written about historical heroes, not autobiographies. Know the difference between the 3 versions.
- What are **spots of time**?

Week 5: Second-Generation Romantic Poets

Lord Byron	
“She Walks in Beauty”	love lyric; iambic tetrameter (love ballad); he uses light and dark to show how attractive even a widow can be! Byron the romancer and love lyricist
<i>Manfred</i>	A dark drama showcasing the tall, dark, handsome, and depressive “Byronic hero”; he contemplates suicide and is visited by spirits
<i>Don Juan</i>	extremely long mock-epic written in ottava rima. Meant to sound improvised. Juan is the anti-hero and the <i>opposite</i> of a Don Juan (the Spanish kind). He is weak, submissive, and washes up on different shores. The humor in <i>Don Juan</i> is cruel and scathing. (See boat scene; scene with Haidee)

Felicia Hemans	
“Casabianca”	<p>The boy stood on the burning deck; study the form of this poem and how it’s amenable to easy memorization.</p> <p>Compare the experience of reciting this poem in public (in a school setting) to the child in the poem.</p> <p>Identification with the protagonist of the poem; a poem that celebrates/critiques this kind of dogged loyalty / suffering for a cause</p>

Percy Shelley	
“Ozymandias”	<p>the fleeting nature of art / sculpture / power / poetry / human civilization</p> <p>Who is more powerful? Kings? Sculptors? Or poets?</p>
“A Defense of Poetry”	<p>Essay: See your notes on Shelley’s refashioning of the old Aeolian Harp trope. What does he add or take away?</p> <p>What does it mean to say that “poets are the legislators of the world?”</p> <p>Why would language be dead with out poets? What is the significance of metaphors and similes?</p>

John Keats	
“On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer”	What? Keats can’t read Greek? How unlike the other Romantic poets! This makes him victim to the scorn of critics like Lockhart.
<p>Letters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Chameleon poet -Apartment with many rooms -Negative Capability 	This is where we find Keats’ literary and poetic philosophies laid out, informally written as musings to his family and friends. Know these 3 main excerpts.

Mary Shelley	
Biography	Understand Mary Shelley’s family background (parentage; radical background; family life; marriage to Percy Shelley)
<i>Frankenstein</i>	<p>Biographical readings available (Mary Shelley as the “creature” or monster rejected by a parent)</p> <p>Political readings available: the French Revolution and its ideals have become a hideous “monster” that can no longer be controlled.</p> <p>Religious and Literary allusions: Mary Shelley draws heavily on <i>Paradise Lost</i> as a source. <i>Frankenstein</i> is understood not only as a scientist, but also a “creator” / “author” / “parent” like God is (and like Shelley herself was).</p>
Intro to <i>Frankenstein</i>	Know the compositional history to <i>Frankenstein</i> and the occasion on which she first had the inspiration for the novel. This trip with Byron and Shelley was a pivotal occasion for gothic literary inspiration.

Essays	
John Lockhart, “The Cockney School of Poetry”	This was one of the major negative reviews that allegedly “killed Keats.” In it, Lockhart pokes fun at Keats’ social class, claiming that his rhymes and meter are askew because of his Cockney accent, poor breeding, and limited education.

(The Second-Generation Romantics tended to die early and tragically, adding to their mystique and the myth of their genius)